

# Old Jenkins home rehabilitated

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Bottom

Construction of an 'instant wetland' will be next phase

By MONTY FOWLER  
Of The Herald-Dispatch staff

**GREENBOTTOM** — The rehabilitation of the historic Jenkins home marks the completion of one development phase at the Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area, and construction of an "instant wetland" will mark the start of another.

The Jenkins home, built in 1835 by Capt. William Jenkins, is more closely associated with his son, Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins, who was born there in 1830 and became a noted lawyer in West Virginia and a U.S. congressman before organizing a Confederate militia group to fight in the Civil War. He was killed in battle in 1864.

The land around the home, 836 acres of farmland and swamp between West Virginia 2 and the Ohio River on the Cabell-Mason county line, was almost forgotten about until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers bought it to replace a waterfowl habitat destroyed by the Gallipolis Locks and Dam expansion project.

"The house has been rehabilitated, not restored" at a cost of about \$120,000, corps spokesman Steve Wright stressed. Restoring it to an 1830s look could have pushed the cost to more than \$200,000.

As it was, the corps had the outside bricks' mortar repaired and the two-story house painted white. Windows were rebuilt, a modern heating and cooling system was installed to prevent interior decay, and new cream paint with gray trim were applied inside.

Kem Shaw of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the wildlife manager for the area, and his wife live in the house. He was originally pleased with the assignment in early 1989 because of tales about the elaborate mansion



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Steve Wright, left, and Bob Maslowski of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers examine the Gen. Albert G. Jenkins home at the Greenbottom Wildlife Management Area, which has been completely rehabilitated by the corps.

they would be living in.

The reality was somewhat different.

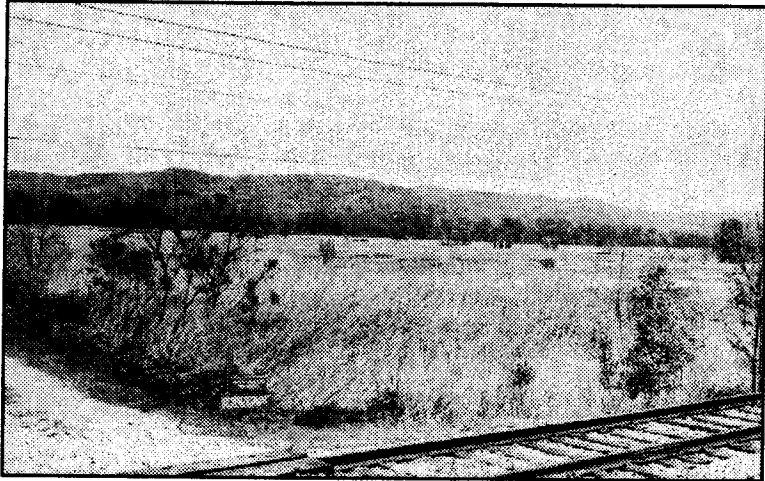
"We figured we were the only house in West Virginia with a windchill factor inside," he quipped. "It was impossible to keep it warm. The warmest room was about 48 degrees in the winter."

Bob Maslowski, a corps archaeologist, said while the six-room house was probably big for the area in its day, there is nothing overly special about the Federal-style residence.

"It's always been made out to be the Jenkins 'mansion,' but it's really just a typical 1830s farmhouse," he said.

Even so, there are details that have survived the passage of time. The north side, which faces Greenbottom Swamp across a sloping lawn dotted with tall trees, has an elaborate fan-shaped multiple-pane window over the front door. Fireplaces at each end warmed the large rooms.

The massive sandstone foundation blocks are in good shape, and



The Herald-Dispatch/Monty Fowler  
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to build a new wetland at this field near the Jenkins home.

Shaw pointed out the large, hand-cut stone downspouts.

Maslowski said the half-basement frequently flooded, and the 1937 flood, among others, left water 5 to 6 feet deep on the first floor.

Wright said although the corps'

main goal was replacing wildlife habitat, the Jenkins home has benefited and should be around for a long time.

Shaw said if the state Division of Culture and History ever wants

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